

• *Isaiah addresses Zion's discouragement*

### 1. God's faithfulness will not allow him to divorce us

• *No certificate of divorce*

• *Exile the result of sin and unresponsiveness*

### 2. God's power is great enough to rescue his oppressed people

• *Isaiah recalls Israel's exile in Egypt*

### 3. God's Servant is qualified to assist us

• *The Servant hears from God and can encourage us*

• *Sufferings are part of His*

The prophet is still addressing the discouragement of Zion. A believer being chastised by God feels as if he or she is forsaken by God. Isaiah foresees a time when Zion will say, 'Yahweh has forsaken me.' But it is not so. God does not forsake his people.

1. **God's faithfulness will not allow him to divorce us.** No bill of divorce can be produced, for God never divorces his people.

<sup>1</sup> *This is what Yahweh says:  
'Where is your mother's certificate of divorce  
with which I sent her away?  
Or to which of my creditors  
did I sell you?  
See, because of your sins you were sold;  
because of your transgressions your mother was sent away.  
<sup>2</sup>When I came, why was there no one?  
When I called, why was there no one to answer?'*

In Israel a divorced woman had to be given a certificate of divorce. Zion feels that God has divorced them. But where is the certificate of divorce? There isn't one! Zion may feel divorced but no certificate of divorce can be produced. God does not divorce his people. Nor does he sell them into slavery because he was in debt to someone. The exile was caused by sin and unresponsiveness.

2. **God's power is great enough to rescue his oppressed people.** As in the days of the exodus, he can dry up the sea so that we can cross on dry land.

*'Was my hand too short to ransom you?  
Do I lack the strength to rescue you?  
By a mere rebuke I dry up the sea,  
I turn rivers into a desert;  
their fish rot for lack of water  
and die of thirst.  
<sup>3</sup>I clothe the sky with darkness  
and make sackcloth its covering.'*

Isaiah recalls here the plagues of Egypt, the judgements that came on Pharaoh as part of God's rescue of his people.

3. **God's Servant is qualified to assist us.** He can speak just the word we need. The Servant himself speaks in Isaiah 50:4.

<sup>4</sup> *The Sovereign Yahweh has given me the  
tongue of those who are taught,  
to know how to speak a timely word to the weary.*

The reason why the Servant can give an encouraging word is that he himself hears from God, and listens responsively to what God says.

*He wakens me morning by morning,  
wakens my ear to listen like those being taught.  
<sup>5</sup>The Sovereign Yahweh opened my ears,  
and I have not been rebellious;  
I have not drawn back.*

Sufferings are part of his qualifications as a sympathizer.

part of His qualifications as a sympathizer

- The Servant's strength comes from God

- He keeps a clear mind and resolves to do God's will

- God will vindicate Him

- He will be proved righteous

#### 4. So the discouraged people may and must trust in God

- Though they walk in darkness, faith will bring them through their troubles

- Those who persist in unbelief and rebellion will face punishment

<sup>6</sup>I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard. I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.

The Servant's strength comes from God.

<sup>7</sup>Because the Sovereign Yahweh was helping me; therefore I will not end in confusion. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.

<sup>8</sup>The one who vindicates me is on my side. Who then will bring charges against me?

Let us face each other!  
Who is he who will defeat me at law?  
Let him confront me!

<sup>9</sup>Behold, it is the Sovereign Yahweh who helps me.

Who is he that will prove me guilty?  
Behold, they will all wear out like a garment;  
the moths will eat them up.

The Servant keeps a clear mind and resolves to do God's will<sup>□1</sup>. God himself will vindicate him<sup>□2</sup>. He may be ill-treated<sup>□3</sup> but he is confident that in the end he will be proved righteous<sup>□4</sup>. The efforts of his enemies will come to nothing<sup>□5</sup>.

4. **So the discouraged people may and must trust in God.** Isaiah 50:10–11 still continues the theme that has been present in Isaiah since 49:14. God-fearing people may feel forsaken, but God has not divorced them. Though they walk in darkness, faith will bring them through their troubles.

<sup>10</sup>Who among you fears Yahweh listening to the voice of his servant, but walks in the darkness, and has no light?  
Let him trust in the name of Yahweh and rely on his God.

On the other hand, those who persist in unbelief and rebellion, walking in their own light rather than God's light, will face painful punishment in the end.

<sup>11</sup>But now, all you who light fires and equip yourselves with flaming torches, go, walk in the light of your fires and of the torches you have set ablaze. This is what you shall receive from my hand: You will lie down in torment.

□1 50:7  
□2 50:8a  
□3 50:6  
□4 50:8b-9a  
□5 50:9b

• *The true believer at his worst is in a better position than the unbeliever*

• *Renew your faith and repentance*

• *Ask for God's mercy and forgiveness – trust Him*

• *Call on God until He rescues you*

The true believer at his worst (one who fears Yahweh but is walking in darkness) is in a better position than the unbeliever who produces his own light! The perplexed believer may trust in God. The unbeliever tries to produce his own light but comes under divine anger. The remedy when we are in the darkness of distress is persistent faith. Don't speak rashly and unbelievably. Ask why he has left you in the darkness for the moment. What was it that made him put you into exile? Renew your faith and repentance. Confess what you know to have been wrong in your life. Ask God for mercy and tell him you need his forgiveness. Insist on trusting God no matter what is happening to you. Say, 'Though he kills me, yet I will trust him.' Trust in God's name – his character. Think of his compassion, his mercy, his loyalty to his promises. Let the child of God walking in darkness turn in faith to God and put faith in him patiently. Say to God, 'Lord, I have nowhere else to go. I will have to wait till you show mercy to me.' As you rely on your God, the light of God's blessing will come to you again. Israel was not exiled for ever. One day, God rescued them abruptly, powerfully. Don't light your own fire to escape the darkness. Call on God until he brings the light to you again.



	<p><b>Dr Michael Eaton</b> is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)</i> books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
<p><i>These specially reformatted chapters "Slices of Bread" produced by Sovereign World Trust are available in three categories as set out below</i></p>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Slices for the Nations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For pastors, libraries and colleges in those parts of the world <b>where resources are scarce and unaffordable</b></li> <li>• In the fullness of time the whole series will be made available <b>free of charge</b></li> <li>• Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or available to download from the <i>Slices</i> web site</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Slices for Sponsors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For those in more prosperous circumstances who <b>can afford to contribute to the development</b> of this material and its distribution with a <b>small monthly donation</b></li> <li>• The same material as <b>Slices for the Nations</b></li> <li>• Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or by download from the <i>Slices</i> web site</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Slices for Everyone / Slice of the Week</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For those who wish to <b>sample</b> the material or dip into it from time to time, a <b>proportion</b> of the PTTB series is available <b>free of charge</b></li> <li>• <b>Slices for Everyone</b> (as a download) or <b>Slice of the Week</b> (attached to a weekly email)</li> <li>• The remainder of the PTTB material is available to Sponsors and those eligible to receive <b>Slices for the Nations</b></li> </ul>
<p>To subscribe please contact: <a href="mailto:slicesofbread@sovereignworldtrust.org.uk">slicesofbread@sovereignworldtrust.org.uk</a> stating which category fits your situation. Further details are at <a href="http://www.slices.org.uk">www.slices.org.uk</a>          Details of the availability of <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> books and how they may be purchased can be found on <a href="http://www.ibtr.org.uk">www.ibtr.org.uk</a></p>		